

BUS & COACH BUYER

17 FEBRUARY 1995 ISSUE 294

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★ 1 x 1986 Scania K112/Jonckheere P.599 - 51 recliners, Courier seat, toilet, TV/Video, drinks machine, double glazed.

★ 1 x 1987 Scania K112/Jonckheere P.50 - 57 recliners, Radio/PA, Telma, double glazed, Courier seat.

★ 2 x 1988 Volvo/Van Hool Alizee - 49/53 recliners, demountable toilet, TV/Video, Radio/PA.

★ 1 x 1988 Daf MB230 Van Hool Alizee - 46 recliners, 9 tables, TV/Video (4 monitors) Radio/PA, large rear mounted kitchen, microwave, fridge, water boiler, cupboards, centre toilet, carpets throughout, double glazing, Webasto heater and timer.

★ 1 x 1990 Daf 2300SB/Caetano Algarve - 49 recliners, toilet, drinks machine, TV/Video, double glazing.

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Specialists in the Setra product for all aspects of service, repair, engine rebuilds, heating, painting etc. Contact for more information.

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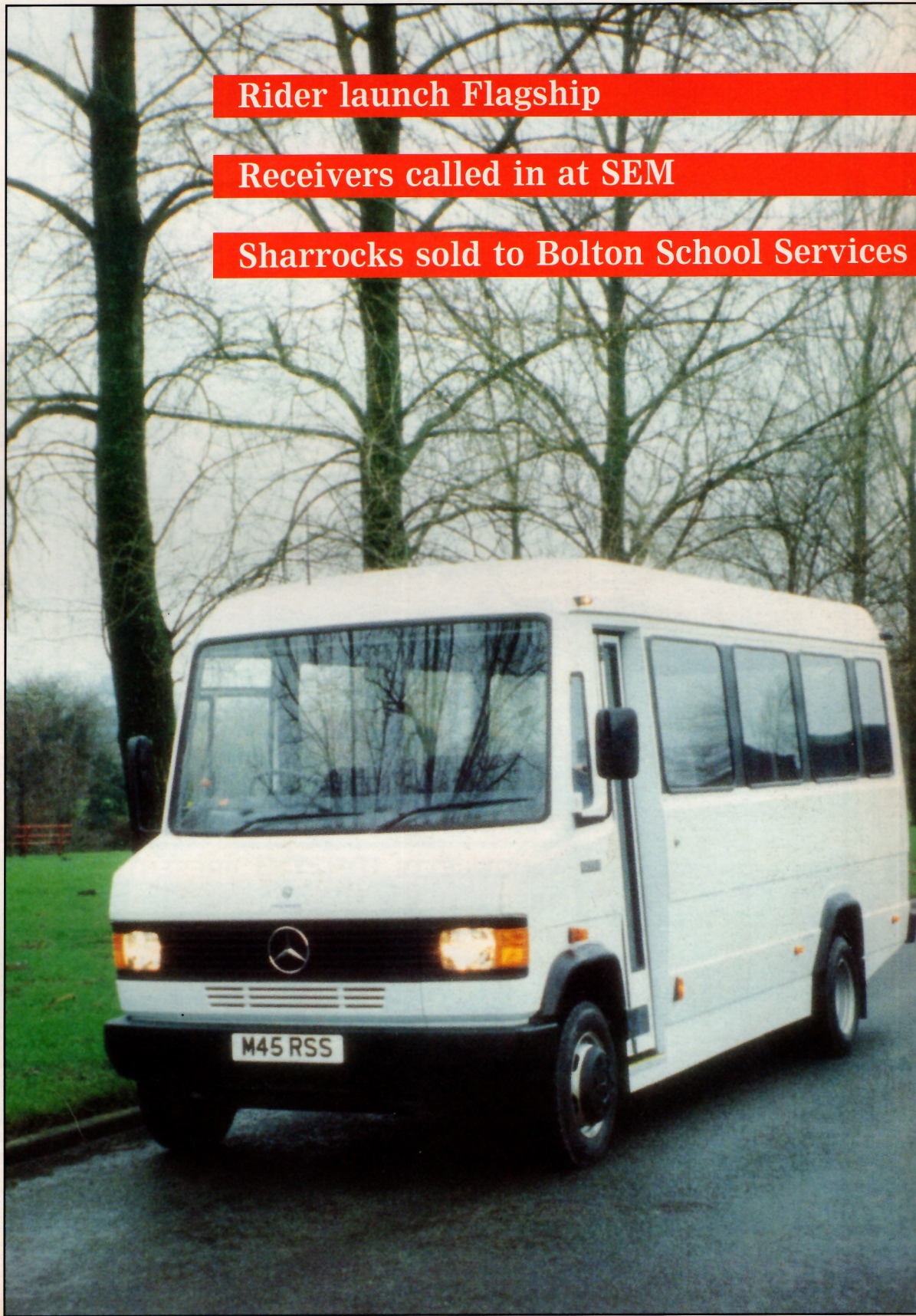


Kässbohrer
Setra. Perfection in coaches.

Rider launch Flagship

Receivers called in at SEM

Sharrocks sold to Bolton School Services





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BUS & COACH BUYER is published by Bus & Coach Buyer Ltd, The Publishing Centre, 1 Woolram Wygate, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 1NU.

(Registered office: 3/4 London Road, Spalding, Lincolnshire PE11 2TA)

Telephone: (01775) 711777. Fax: (01775) 711737

Editorial director: Stuart Jones; publishing director: Steve Cole; sales director: Joy Osborne; advertisement controller: Lorne Kirkwood; classified telephone sales: Martin Laverton; Amanda Smith; technical editor: Martin Cole; production and administration executive: Sandy Brooks; national sales executive: Peter Naylor.

A copy of Bus & Coach Buyer is mailed free to a list of over 5,500 UK bus, coach and minibuses operators every week.

Bus & Coach Buyer is typeset by TYPEtec, County Hall, Market Place, Boston, Lincolnshire PE21 6DY. Tel: (01205) 369560 and printed by Warners (Midlands) plc, Bournemouth, Dorset.

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Front Cover:

Premier Minicoach Conversions has supplied this Mercedes Benz 609D to Tom Dawson Travel of Aberdeen. It has been fitted with 24 of Premier's own Classic high back seats and an electric power door.

News

New Non-Exec director at GAG

Go-Ahead Group has announced the appointment of Duncan Clegg as a non-executive director with effect from 2 February. Mr Clegg was an executive director of corporate finance at Lazard Bros. for 17 years, advising companies such as British Steel, Thames Water, TSB and National Power. He currently holds similar non-executive positions with Cox Insurance Holding PLC and Low & Bonar PLC.

BSS Acquire Sharrocks

Bolton School Services Ltd, operating as BSS Coaches has announced the acquisition of Sharrocks Coaches of Westhoughton. Sharrocks' proprietor, Mrs Kay Hill has now retired, having been in control of the company since the early 1980s. The family run concern had been established over 50 years and provided quality coach services,

private hires and contract work throughout the Greater Manchester area. The existing operation has now been transferred to BSS Coaches at Bolton School on Chorley New Road.

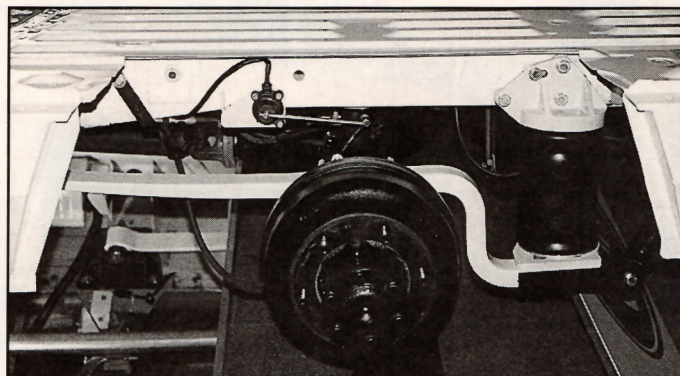
BSS Coaches had been providing services on a non-commercial basis for 30 years and moved into private hires and contracts in early 1993. The acquisition is claimed to be the result of an increase in business combined with the opportunity to offer existing and future customers a higher class of service. It has increased the fleet size to nine full sized coaches and three Mercedes Benz minicoaches. Two of Sharrocks' drivers have joined the new operation which now employs ten drivers, an administrator and a transport manager.

SEM collapse

SEM Engineering of Basildon, builders and suppliers of conversions and coach-built minibuses, particularly to the accessible transport market, has been placed in administrative receivership. SEM is also known for its manufacture of specialist agricultural equipment and the development of off-road or four wheel drive vehicles. The company was the subject of a £1.4m management buy-out in July 1992. SEM had invested heavily in research

and development which culminated with an electronically controlled air-suspension system for the Ford Transit minibus. This was launched at the Community Transport Association's annual exhibition at Blackpool during November 1994.

The affairs of SEM are now in the hands of Morton, Thornton & Co. of St Albans. David John Mason and Nigel John Hamilton-Smith have been appointed joint administrative receivers.



SEM's air suspension system for the Ford Transit

AD Coach Sales to sell Plaxton buses

AD Coach Sales of Tiverton have announced that the company has become a stockist for Plaxton service buses. The company will initially be in a position to supply coachbuilt Beaver minibuses on Mercedes Benz chassis cowl. Speaking for AD Coach Sales, proprietor Glyn Goodwin said, 'We have been able to put together a number of leasing and contract hire packages, allowing the financing of new vehicles closely tailored to individual requirements. A further advantage to West Country operators will be the facility to enter part exchange deals on new service buses.'

Artic lowfloors

Van Hool has announced an order to supply ten articulated lowfloor buses to German public transport operator Duisburger Verkehrsgesellschaft (DVG), following a successful European tendering procedure. The vehicles will be AG300s which feature completely flat floors from front to back, with the engine mounted vertically on the off-side, between the first and second axles. They have a step height of 320mm and large standee areas around the doors with very few internal seats.

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- We also have new Scania K93CRB Berkhof Excellence 1000L ready for delivery



SCANIA

Scania Coach Sales Ltd, Claylands Avenue,
Worksop, Nottinghamshire S81 7DL

Telephone: (01909) 500822. Facsimile: (01909) 500165

1992 (September) MAN 11.190 JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE P35

34 recliners, grey/red/orange moquette, rear floor mounted toilet, servery, drinks machine, double glazed tinted windows, finished white.

M.O.T. AUGUST 1995

1989 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M

53 recliners, brown moquette, double glazed tinted side windows, courier seat, TELMA retarder, power entrance door, finished white.

M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1995

1982 BOVA EUROPA INTEGRAL 12M

51 seats, (46 reclining + 5 fixed at rear), brown striped moquette, courier seat, tinted side windows, curtains, power entrance door, finished all white.

M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1995

1989 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M

49 recliners, brown moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, courier seat, TELMA retarder, power entrance door, finished white.

M.O.T. SEPTEMBER 1995

1992 (September) VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE 12M

53 seats, grey/red/orange moquette, rear sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, power entrance door, finished white/metallic silver.

M.O.T. OCTOBER 1995

1989 (September) VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M

51/55 recliners, retrimmed in beige/brown moquette, centre sunken demountable toilet, continental door, tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, power entrance door, wired TV/video, finished white.

M.O.T. AUGUST 1995

1981 BOVA EUROPA INTEGRAL 12M

53 seats, (48 reclining + 5 fixed at rear), brown striped moquette, courier seat, tinted side windows, curtains, power entrance door, finished all white.

M.O.T. OCTOBER 1995

BRINGING YOU THE BEST IN QUALITY USED COACHES

1987 LAG PANORAMIC INTEGRAL 12M

DAF powered, 49 recliners, grey/red moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, courier seat, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, driver's sleeping berth, AIR CONDITIONING, power entrance door, drinks machine, TELMA retarder, wired TV/video, finished cream/light brown.

M.O.T. JULY 1995

1990 DAF SB2300 JONCKHEERE DEAUVILLE 12M

51 recliners, Autumn tint moquette, centre sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, courier seat, power entrance door, water boiler, fridge, wired TV/video, finished all white.

M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1995

1989 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200 12M

53 recliners, red/grey moquette, tinted side windows, curtains, power entrance door, finished all cream.

M.O.T. JANUARY 1996

MOSELEY

MOSELEY (PCV) LTD

ASKERN ROAD, CARCROFT,
DONCASTER DN6 8DE.

Tel: (0302) 330600. Fax: (0302) 330606

1984 (August) VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500 12M

49 recliners, beige/brown moquette, rear o/s sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows, curtains, courier seat, drinks machine, driver's berth, power entrance door, TELMA retarder, wired TV/video, finished white/red/blue.

M.O.T. AUGUST 1995

1986 DAF DKFL JONCKHEERE JUBILEE P50 12M

49 recliners, brown moquette, rear o/s sunken toilet, continental door, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, drinks machine, courier seat, power entrance door, finished all white.

M.O.T. AUGUST 1995

1984 LEYLAND REDLINE REEVE BURGESS

33 seat SERVICE SALOON, brown trim to seating, power entrance door, finished white/orange/blue.

M.O.T. OCTOBER 1995

1990 (October) TOYOTA CAETANO OPTIMO

18 recliners, grey/red moquette, courier seat, curtains, power entrance door, finished white.

M.O.T. AUGUST 1995

1987 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE-H 12M

49 recliners, beige/brown moquette, O/S rear floor mounted toilet, continental door, courier seat, double glazed tinted side windows with pull-down blinds, water boiler, TELMA retarder, finished white/orange/black.

M.O.T. NOVEMBER 1995

1989 (August) LEYLAND TIGER 260 DUPLÉ 320 12M

53 recliners, brown/orange moquette, double glazed tinted side windows, pull-down blinds, power entrance door, TELMA retarder, chassis autolube, finished white/gold/pink.

M.O.T. SEPTEMBER 1995

1984 VOLVO B10M LAG GALAXY 12M

49 recliners, grey/blue moquette, O/S rear sunken toilet, continental door, courier seat, curtains, water boiler, coolbox, Webasto, TELMA retarder, wired TV/video, finished white/blue/green.

M.O.T. DECEMBER 1995

PARTS STOCKIST - BOVA, VAN HOOL, TOYOTA OPTIMO



Bob Vale Coach Sales

TEL: 01494 716996

Kingshill House,
Spurlands End Road,
Great Kingshill,
High Wycombe,
Bucks HP15 6PE
Tel: 01494 716996
Fax: 01494 716331

VOLVOS

1988 E VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, new re-trimmed, 57 fixed seats, pannier lockers, POD, radio/PA, low mileage **£58,500**

1988 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 53 reclining seats, courier seat, pannier lockers, POD, radio/PA, low mileage **£58,500**

1987 VOLVO B10M GLE JONCKHEERE 599, 49 new re-trimmed reclining seats, courier seat, rear sunken toilet, continental door, double/glazed, splitter, Telma, fridge boiler, Webasto, Fin rad, radio/PA, TV **£63,500**

1986 VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, low driver, 49 reclining seats, courier seat, centre demount sunken toilet, double glazed, air cond, drinks machine, aircraft lockers, PA **£58,500**

1985 Sept C VOLVO B10M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 53 reclining retrimmed seats, plus courier, double glazing, Webasto, curtains, provision for centre toilet/continental door, repainted white, exceptional **£55,000**

1983 PP VOLVO B10M BERKHOF EVEREST, 49 retrimmed vogel seats, courier, rear sunken toilet, bunks, drinks, Telma, splitter, radio/PA/TV, video, mint, must be seen **£32,500**

1983 PP VOLVO B10M JONCKHEERE P50, 51 retrimmed reclining seats, courier seat, rear sunken toilet, continental door, bunk, d/glazed, radio/PA/TV, repainted white **£35,000**

1981 VOLVO B58 DUPLÉ DOMINANT IV, 57 seater, double glazing, POD, rad/PA, new test **£12,000**

1981 VOLVO B10M DUPLÉ DOMINANT IV, 50 reclining seats, d/glazed, Telma, POD, radio/PA **£16,500**

1980 VOLVO B58 VAN HOOL ALIZEE, 52 seater, radio/PA, POD, immaculate **£18,000**

OTHERS

1990 KASSBOHRER SETRA HD215, Mercedes V8, 49 reclining seats, courier, retarder, bunk, boiler, fridge, TV, video **£88,500**

1988 LEYLAND TIGER CUMMINS L10 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3500, 44 reclining seats, courier seat, rear sunken toilet, servery including fridge, boiler optics, wardrobe, wired for TV/video, curtains, d/glazed, manual with Telma, mint **£52,500**

1988 DEC CHARISMA SANOS, Mercedes engine and gearbox, 49 reclining seats, courier seat, centre sunken toilet, air conditioning, radio/PA/TV **£35,000**

1986 PP NEOPLAN PLAXTON 4000 DOUBLE DECKER, 71 retrimmed reclining seats, courier seat, servery, toilet, Cummins 350 BHP engine, new ZF auto transmission, repainted and repainted white **£52,500**

1983 LEYLAND TIGER DUPLÉ CARIBBEAN, 49 reclining seats, semi auto, rear toilet, hydracyclic gearbox, PA **£17,500**

1979 AEC 760 DUPLÉ DOMINANT EXPRESS, semi-auto, 53 seater, good for year **£3,500**

1978 BEDFORD YMT SUPREME EXPRESS, 53 retrimmed seats, POD, Aug test, good clean vehicle **£4,500**

LANCASHIRE BUS and COACH SALES

COACHES FOR SALE

1987 E Reg CAETANO VIENNA, I-veco running gear, MoT until Sept '95, 19 seats, immaculate

1987 E Reg MCW METRORIDER, 25 coach seats, manual gearbox, MoT until Sept '95

1982 DAF MB200 AIPWA BODYWORK, new engine fitted, MoT until Sept '95, 49 seater, exec spec

1984 DAF MB200 CARIBBEAN II, 49 recliners, full exec spec, MoT until Nov '95. Private plate fitted

SERVICE BUSES FOR SALE

1987 RENAULT DODGE, Northern Counties, 23 seats, 8 stn, automatic. Choice of 2, MoT until May '95

1987 RENAULT DODGE, Northern Counties, 25 seats, 9 stn, automatic, new tyres, MoT until July '95

1987 RENAULT DODGE ALEXANDER, 25 seats, 8 stn, automatic. Choice of 2, 10/12 months MoT

1977 LEOPARD DUPLÉ DOMINANT, express doors, MoT Dec '95, 47 seats plus pen

1982 LEOPARD, ECW BODYWORK, MoT Nov '95, bus seats, luggage pen, semi-auto, express doors

1987 MCW METRORIDERS, 23 seats, 8 stn, Alison, automatic. Choice of 2, MoT May/June '95

1987 RENAULT DODGE, Reeve Burgess, automatic, long MoT, 25 seats, 8 stn. Tidy vehicle

1987 VW CITY PACERS, 23 seats, 8 stn, automatic gearbox, new engine in 1, full Diptac spec. Choice of 2

1985 QUEST, 25 seater, Perkins engine, Alison gearbox, wheelchair ramp, low floor bus

1985 TRANSIT, 16 seats, 5 stn. Choice of 10 with and without MoTs

1987 FREIGHT ROVER, Carlyle 2, 1 with Transit running gear, long MoTs. Choice of 3

Mk1 LEYLAND NATIONALS Choice of 4. All will be sold with 12 months MoT

BREAKING OR SELLING COMPLETE

3 x NATIONAL Mk1s Engine u/s, complete

1 x NATIONAL Mk1 Incomplete, with good engine, gearbox

1 x LEOPARD DOMINANT II Express doors, engine u/s

2 x FORD TRANSIT CARLYLE Incomplete, engine OK

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News

UVG update corporate identity

Yorkshire based Universal Vehicles Group has now completed a major re-vamp of its corporate identity. The group has been restructured to combine WS Coach-builders with the Brighthouse based ambulance manufacturer Customline - creating a £26m group with 340 employees. Tony McClellan, UVG chief executive, said: 'We want to update the image of UVG to reflect the very substantial changes which have taken place over the last 18 months. These have included upgrading our production and design facilities plus a major investment in new personnel. The group is now embarking on a major sales programme and it is important that new customers, both at home and abroad, see us as a cohesive manufacturing force, offering the very best of British engineering.'



One of three Dennis Lance Plaxton Verde buses which have been introduced on Rider Huddersfield's Flagship services.

Rider launch flagship

The Mayor of Kirklees, Councillor Harold Sheldon, officially launched the first three Flagship vehicles which are being operated by Rider Huddersfield. The new network of Flagship services is expected to be fully operational in the summer and the new buses, three Dennis Lance Plaxton Verdes, are the first of 110 buses in a £9m Badgerline investment programme for

the Huddersfield area.

Flagship has promised to raise standards for passengers and this has already led to the operation of cleaner buses with friendlier drivers, the removal of fareboxes and regular fare bargains. In addition to the appearance of a high number of new buses, Rider Huddersfield intends to put more buses onto routes to improve services.

Open trip to Neoplan in Berlin

Smiths Coaches of Marple have just taken delivery of the first pair of Neoplan Transliner bodied Dennis Javelin GX coaches. Proprietor, Ken Smith, is arranging a visit to the Neoplan factory in Berlin using one of the new vehicles and is offering seats on the trip to other operators at £250 per person.

Departing from Manchester via the M62 on 11 March and crossing from Hull to Rotterdam by North Sea Ferries, the party will enjoy a leisurely journey to Berlin, returning from Rotterdam to Hull on 17 March. The cost per person sharing a twin room is £250.00. If you would like more details contact Ken Smith, Smiths Coaches (Marple) Ltd, telephone 0161 427 2825 or 0161 427 5839.

THREE REASONS NOT TO MISS THE TAS BUS INDUSTRY CONFERENCE ON 2/3 MARCH

THE BIRTH OF UK GUIDED BUSWAYS

We look at the scheme taking shape in Leeds and hear all about it from the individuals behind the project. We learn all about the Suffolk guideway opened last month, and plans for a system in Oxford

THE PACKAGE APPROACH

We look at the successes and the failures, who is getting money for bus priority and what they are doing with it

LOW FLOOR: DEATHKNELL OR SAVIOUR FOR THE INDUSTRY?

The latest information on low-floor schemes, passenger response and what new plans for legislation could mean for the industry

PLUS:

- Alternative Fuels • Approaches to Quality •
- The Ticket to Ride Initiative •

The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution - What would its targets mean for the industry?

TAS
presents

THE BUS IN A NEW ERA TURNING THE TIDE

The third bi-annual conference on the future of the bus in local transport

The Queens Hotel, Leeds
Thursday and Friday
2 & 3 March 1995

Speakers include:

Keith Ahlers, Badgerline Holdings
Richard Armitage, Independent Consultant
Andrew Braddock, London Transport
Caroline Cahm, Nat. Federation of Bus Users
John Carr, West Yorkshire PTE
Brian Cox, Stagecoach Holdings
Brian Fisher, Plymouth Citybus
Peter Grimm, Suffolk County Council
Ted Hesketh, Ulsterbus and CPT President
Professor John Hibbs, University of Central England
Keith Moffat, Oxford Bus Company
Adrian Pope, Leeds City Council
Russell Richardson, Optare
Bob Tebb, Badgerline Rapid Transit
John Walker, Oxford City Council

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Volvo News

Double Deck Boost

The good old British double decker has not had the happiest press recently. It has been portrayed as dirty and smelly in some quarters, and has also been the subject of scare stories about plans from Brussels to exclude the concept from forthcoming legislation.

Steve Dewhurst, Bus Sales Manager, confounds this view. "Registrations were down last year, but I am a lot happier about 1995. Our order bank alone exceeds the total number of deckers registered last year, and we are only in the middle of February!

"I think some people have been put off by the Brussels stories, but we are in very close contact with the British and European authorities and we have seen nothing which causes us concern. We suspect that they will see the double decker as a popular concept in the British Isles, and also in Berlin, so it will be included in the new harmonised regulations as a special type.

"The other objections are understandable, but that is because the majority of deckers entered service twelve or more years ago. Technology has advanced greatly since then. It is no longer possible to hear the bus coming, before you see it!"

The Volvo Olympian is the definitive double decker, having been market leader for over a decade, yet has always kept ahead of



One of eight Northern Counties Palatine II bodied Volvo Olympians now used by Northumbria on routes serving the Metrocentre

legislation. The robust and durable design has benefitted not only from feedback in the home market but also from the more demanding conditions in Hong Kong and Singapore.

Steve says: "The Olympian is not a compromise. It was designed only to be a double decker and all the engineering calculations were made on that basis. The well proven drop centre rear axle enables us to offer highbridge and lowbridge versions. It is a choice between internal headroom

and external clearance, which can be important on some routes.

"We are working closely with our bodybuilders, Alexander (at Belfast and Falkirk), East Lancs and Northern Counties, to provide precisely what the customer needs. They have been putting a lot of thought into their work, making their bodywork more comfortable and accessible. There have also been big improvements in styling. Even on a bus that is important; it attracts the customer and encourages him to use the bus."

The latest Olympian has a high degree of standardisation with other models in the Volvo range, which makes life easier for workshop and stores staff. High commonality gives some savings in production, but the real benefit comes in

the operating life, which, on a heavy duty bus, is unusually long by automotive standards. A double decker which goes into service today will probably still need parts in twenty year's time, so standardisation, by a major manufacturer, is a good insurance policy.

Steve believes that the double decker has many operational advantages and that sales in the last few years have only been low because there were so many in circulation and operators were adjusting the mix of sizes in their fleets.

"Where there is a regular and heavy flow of custom on trunk routes, the double decker is still the most cost effective bus. It takes up little road space and is better able to handle many of the street obstructions which planners seem so keen to install.

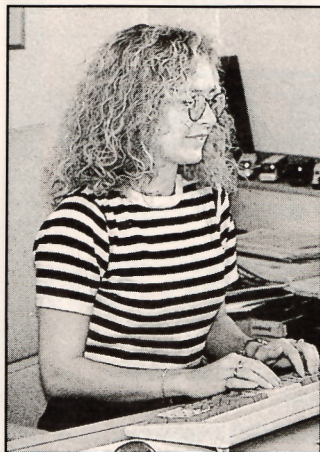
"Some people object to the staircase, but there are more seats downstairs than on a minibus for the less agile, and the upper deck comes into its own at peak periods.

"As I said earlier, the order book is looking promising. Stagecoach is stepping up its intake this year. We have the regular order from Lothian to replace older deckers, and we will supply a further 60 Olympians to Dublin Bus this year. We have welcome orders from London, so soon after privatisation, and several more, from fleets large and small, all around the country. It is a very welcome revival."



A new East Lancs Olympian from the London & Country fleet.

Volvo News



Toni Herman

Toni Holds the Fort

Toni Herman has worked at Volvo for eight years, originally as secretary to Bill Russell, then moving to Sandy Glennie about eighteen months ago. She is a lively personality with a very active life. In between her love of animals, horse riding and travel, she is studying for her teacher's certificate in secretarial studies and working at the hub of a busy office.

Toni says that the work is very varied. "The office is always busy, and the facilities are excellent. I enjoy the contact with customers, large and small, and the dealers. I also work regularly with colleagues in Sweden and all the Volvo companies and suppliers on the continent, but you get used to that in an international company."

Asked whether any part of the work is difficult, Toni gives a lovely smile and says: "Only trying to guess what my boss is going to do next!"

More for Nottingham

Nottingham City Transport is continuing its policy of fleet modernisation by adding five B10M's, five B10B's and three B6's, all bodied by Alexander.



One of eight B6 Alexander Dash buses with Sheffield Omnibus

B6 City

Sheffield is rapidly acquiring the reputation of the B6 city. These photographs show examples of recent deliveries to Yorkshire Terrier and Sheffield Omnibus, both with Alexander bodywork. Also, Mainline has recently placed an order for 30



Yorkshire Terrier now have six Volvo B6

B6 with Plaxton bodywork, along with another 25 Alexander B10M's.

Saying Yes to No

Over a year ago, Volvo Aftermarket launched the free fitment by dealers of a wide range of service exchange units. Starters, alternators, steering pumps, air dryers, turbochargers, intercoolers, compressors, radiators, fans and clutch kits were among the units available.

The scheme was launched under the slogan "The man who likes to say 'No'." The "man" in question was the Service Manager at every Volvo Dealership. Nick Riley, Product Manager Aftermarket, says the scheme has been very successful with so many customers saying "Yes" to the Dealers that it is being continued, at least until October, and that the range of parts has been extended. Get in touch with your local Dealer today.



Probably the last new bus to be acquired by old established A1 Service before selling out to Stagecoach was this Volvo B10B with Wrights bodywork.

"The Action Service"

Not to be confused with Action Service Europe is the high profile Aftermarket promotion which Volvo has been running in recent months. Various views of Hercules freighters, used by Transport Command, are helping to put across the message.

Norman McIlwraith explains: "Transport Command has the image of being a highly efficient support organisation, able to operate effectively under all conditions. We are dedicated to achieving the very best in product support for our customers and chose this theme to put the message across, not just to customers, but to Dealers and all our own staff."

"We are not planning to drop parts in by Hercules, but we are aiming for the same standards of professionalism, throughout the organisation."

European Expansion

Volvo recently announced plans to invest a further £430 million in developing its automotive operations in Europe, including the Irvine plant in Scotland. The expansion plans have been made possible by a considerable improvement in profitability and re-focusing of the company's strategy after the aborted liaison with Renault.

Clarke's Take a Dozen

Clarke's of London are taking ten Volvo B10M Jonckheere coaches and two B12T double deckers with Jonckheere Monaco coachwork for the new season. It represents an investment of over £2,000,000 by one of the capital's best known family firms.

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1994 L DAF WS3000 Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF KS3000 Easishift Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF SB3000 Int Retarder, Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R/Toilet
1994 L DAF HS2700 Auto Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1994 LT DAF MB2301 T Auto Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF KS3000 Auto Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF SB3000 Auto Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF MB230LT Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1993 K DAF MB230LT Van Hool Alizee H, 51R
1992 J DAF SB3000 Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R/Toilet
1992 J DAF MB230LB Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1992 J DAF MB230LT Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1991 H DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R/Toilet
1990 G SCANIA K93, Van Hool Alizee, 55R
1990 G DAF MB230LT Van Hool Alizee H, 51R/Toilet
1990 G DAF MB230LT Van Hool Alizee SH, 53R/Toilet
1989 F DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee DH, 53R
1989 F DAF SB2305 Van Hool Alizee DH, 51R/Toilet



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1989 F DAF MB230LT Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet

1989 F DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500, 53R

1989 F DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet

1989 F DAF DHTD Duple 320SL, 51R/Toilet

1989 F DAF SB220 Optare Delta, 2 door, 37 luggage pens

1988 PP VOLVO B10M Van Hool Alizee SH, 49R/Toilet

1988 E DAF SB2300 Van Hool Alizee, 51R/Toilet

1988 E DAF SB2300 Duple 340 SL, 53R

1988 E DAF MB230LT Plaxton 3500, 49R/Toilet

1988 E DAF MB230LB Plaxton 3500, 53R

1987 D LEYLAND, Tiger 245 Duple 340, 53R

1987 E LEYLAND, Tiger 245 Plaxton 3200, 57

1986 C LEYLAND, Tiger 245 Duple 340, 51R/Toilet

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1988 E DAF MB200 FL Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet

1987 D DAF SB2300 Plaxton 3500, 49R/Toilet

1987 D DAF MB230LB Duple 340, 53R

1986 C DAF MB200FL Plaxton 3500, 51R/Toilet

1986 D DAF MB200FL Plaxton 3500, 49R/Toilet

1989 F VOLVO B10M Plaxton 3200, 53R

1984 PP LEYLAND, Tiger Duple Dominant IV, 53

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Operator Focus

YORK PULLMAN

The newest and oldest premises in coaching?

The York Pullman name has been an established one since well before the industry was originally regulated under the 1930 Transport Act, though three changes of ownership in the last decade have completely changed the face of the company and its operations. It now belongs to Durham Travel Services, the Hetton-le-Hole based coach operator specialising in National Express work, which purchased it in February 1993 from Kingston Upon Hull City Transport. They had acquired it, minus its stage carriage operations, from Reynard Coaches, originally of Tadcaster. Reynard had bought York Pullman in January 1985 and in July 1990 sold its bus operations to the Rider Group which incorporated them within its newly formed Rider York subsidiary, now part of the Badgerline Group.

After this confusing chain of transfers, Durham Travel Services took on a coach company with 22 vehicles and no garage facilities. Initially, the best operating base that could be found was an old aircraft hangar at the Yorkshire Air Museum, Elvington, in which a water supply and telephones were installed and mobile cabins were brought in to provide



One of the former Hull Atlanteans in the latest livery on the York Pullman City Tour.

offices and a rest room. Discussions with the site's owners were fruitful and they agreed to erect a purpose-built bus depot adjoining the Museum which the company has taken a long lease upon. Unfortunately the building process took far longer than originally anticipated and instead of the November 1993 moving date that had been planned, it was not until October 1994 that York Pullman had its new depot.

The premises are in a relatively rural location a few miles out of York in the Hull direction. With a large concreted yard, three bay workshop, offices and a mezzanine floor to provide a stores facility, it cost around £350,000 to construct, added to which the company has since spent around a further £30,000 on equipment. There are no pits but two sets of Somers mobile column lifts enable vehicles to be raised for inspection and major component changes. There is sufficient headroom for double deck buses to be lifted and if necessary they can be left suspended on a set of axle stands if both sets of mobile lifts are required else

where. Other equipment includes a rolling road and a Hans Hougard brake tester. Should the site become too small as the business expands, there is adjacent space available for growth. In charge of maintenance is engineering manager Mick Simpkin, ably assisted by three fitters.

With the premises finally operational, the company faced the unusual situation of having what it believes were both the newest and the oldest buildings in use by a coach operator. While other operators will build new depots and lay claim to the first half of this record, Com-

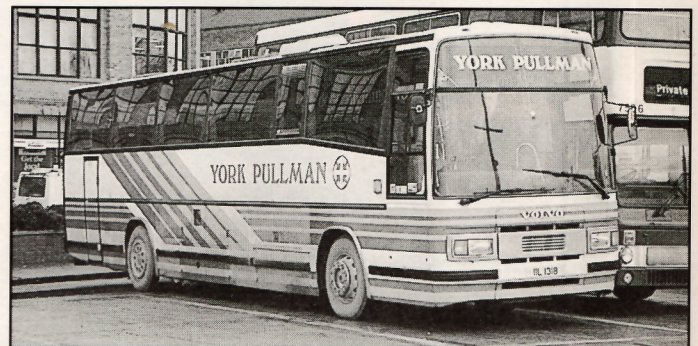
mercial Manager Andy Harris reckons it is unlikely that anyone will come up with anywhere older than Pullman's offices in central York. Built in 1497 as part of the walls surrounding York's St Mary's Abbey, Bootham Tower is situated opposite Exhibition Square, from where for many years, Pullman's services to Helperby, Easingwold and Linton left. Last year, after the lengthy process of obtaining permission had been overcome, a few amendments were made to the internal arrangement of the property which enable it to offer a range of goods on sale, including books, maps



A rolling road, column lifts and brake tester are among the facilities at the new depot.



Two Plaxton bodied coaches outside the new depot.



One of two former Wallace Arnold Volvo B10M Plaxton Paramount 3500s laying over in Leeds Bus Station.

Operator Focus

and T-shirts, most of which are York connected in some way. As part of a move to develop beyond the simple provision of coaches, the company has also started hiring personal stereo systems to tourists who want to hear details of the city in one of five languages.

Workload

York Pullman's operating philosophy is somewhat different from that of its parent company. It has a very varied workload whereas Durham Travel Services concentrates on contracted express work and a growing private hire operation. There is overlap, however, because several of the National Express schedules for which DTS is responsible are actually operated from York. Twelve of the forty or so drivers employed are on National Express rosters and five vehicles are maintained at and operated from York.

Of the current fleet strength of 32, 14 are employed daily on school contracts, including some baths and playing field contracts. Five school contracts were operated in the Harrogate area until late last year but these were lost in a tendering exercise. Free shopping buses are run on behalf of the Co-op and there is a single tendered local service which sees Pullman vehicles operating twice a week on the 195 service which is usually the haunt of East Yorkshire Motor Services.

The company's most visible presence in York is provided by the open top double deckers used on the York Pullman City Tour. Competition for custom is consider-



Most of the double deckers owned are Leyland Atlanteans, but this Bristol VR is an exception.

able but the service, which will recommence in April for the season, is a useful part of the overall mix of work. It also helps serve as an advertisement for the company in the way that the service buses once did. Of the 14 double deckers owned, five are open top, all of them in the latest cream with red and maroon stripe livery in which the whole of the fleet is gradually being repainted. A new venture for 1995 will see

open top operation extended with the May introduction of a Whitby circular tour. One bus will be based in the picturesque harbour town and lettered accordingly. Andy Harris says the route is such a good one that he'd pay to ride on it himself.

Whitby also features as one of the destinations in an extensive excursion programme which is tailored to suit several distinct markets. In addition to the local excursion

sions offered during the school holidays, the company has found a ready market for a new programme of pre-advertised shoppers' day trips which appeal to the local population. Leaving York each day at 09.15 and returning at 15.15 they can be operated using a school service vehicle on school days. Originally started before Christmas for shoppers on present hunting expeditions, they proved so popular that they now run all year and carry very good loads. For £2.50 a person, customers are offered the retail wonders of the likes of Hull, Middlesbrough and Leeds.

Taking full advantage of York's popularity as a tourism centre, a tourist excursion programme operates from April to October. Working on the basis that the potential customers are different, the destinations are the same favourites every week. This market has been identified as possessing growth opportunity and to reflect this, the resources allocated to it are being increased for 1995. A recently re-moquetted Plaxton Paramount 3200 Dennis Javelin driven by a dedicated driver accompanied by a guide will together provide a quality



The new garage premises have no pits. Two sets of Somers mobile column lifts are available if a vehicle needs lifting.



Washing one of the oldest members of the fleet.

take stock

Operator Focus

One of the Dennis Dorchester Plaxton Paramount 3200s passing through Birmingham.

package.

Andy Harris is more cautious about the potential for Pullman's tour programme which started in 1994 with a series of weekend breaks. This year the choice of UK and continental packages has grown, and while continuing growth is planned, Andy does not underestimate the strength of the local competition which includes several of the big nationally advertised names.

More promising is the incoming market for which York Pullman is willing to act more like a tour operator, providing itineraries, arranging meals and booking attractions. By offering more than just a coach trip new customers have been attracted. Building on this, the company is developing links with other York businesses. Working in partnership with one of the boat operators on the river Ouse and one of the walking guide companies, the group is able to offer complete packages. Other coach operators are seen as potential customers for these services and a brochure publicising

what is available is currently being prepared. It may also be that the company can assist those who prefer to handle booking arrangements themselves - the coach washing and toilet drop facilities are available to other operators while maintenance facilities and relief coaches can be provided for those having need of them. Andy can be contacted on 0904 622992.



This early 1980s shot taken at Pullman's former depot in Navigation Road, York, shows how the pre-deregulation fleet included coaches and both double and single deck service buses, all of which were bought new.



Vehicles

The fleet inherited in 1993 was dominated by Bedford coaches and former KHCT Leyland Atlantean double deckers, with a few Dennis coaches of the Dorchester

and Javelin types. It was immediately strengthened with two former Wallace Arnold Volvo B10M Paramount 3500s and four of the Bedfords have since been disposed of.

For this season, a 1990



Two of the Bedfords parked in the yard between school contracts.



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| MAN 18.370 | ALGARVE II, 3.5 Metre | 49/53 recliners, centre toilet, double glazed |
| DENNIS JAVELIN | ALGARVE II, 3.35 Metre | 53 recliners or 57 fixed seats, double glazed |
| MAN 11.190 | ALGARVE II | 35 recliners, double glazed, continental door |
| TOYOTA | OPTIMO III | 18 and 21 seat GL |
| TOYOTA HI-ACE | CAETANO LUX-ACE | 11 seat, PSV conversion |

USED VEHICLE SELECTION

| | | | |
|----------|------------------------|------------------------|---|
| 1990(G) | VOLVO B10M | ALGARVE | 49/53 recliners, executive spec |
| 1990(G) | MERCEDES 0303 | PARAMOUNT 3500 | 48 recliners, executive spec |
| 1990(G) | MERCEDES 0303 | CHARISMA | 49/53 recliners, exec spec |
| 1990(G) | DAF SB 2305 | ALGARVE | 53 recliners, courier seat, power door |
| 1989(PP) | VOLVO B10M | PARAMOUNT 3500 | 48 recliners, double glazed, toilet |
| 1987(D) | LEYLAND TIGER | PARAMOUNT 3500 | 49 recliners, rear toilet, continental door |
| 1986(C) | BEDFORD YNV | SOLD '00 | 53 seats, power door, tinted windows |
| 1986(PP) | DAF | FUTURA FHD | 49 recliners, toilet, berth, etc. |
| 1985(B) | DAF SB 2300 | ESPRITE | 53 seats, power door |
| 1984(PP) | LEY ROYAL TIGER | PARAMOUNT 3500 | 53 recliners, power door, courier seat |
| 1982(Y) | BEDFORD YNT | CASTRASUA BRISA | 53 seats, power door |
| 1979(T) | VOLVO B58 | DOMINANT II | 53 seats, power door |

MINIBUS SELECTION

| | | | |
|---------|-------------------|------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 1992(K) | TOYOTA | OPTIMO II | 21 seats, power door, tinted windows |
| 1991(J) | TOYOTA | OPTIMO II | 21 seats, power door, tinted windows |
| 1989(G) | TOYOTA | OPTIMO I | 18 seats, power door, tinted windows |
| 1987(D) | TOYOTA | OPTIMO I | 21 seats, manual door |
| 1986(C) | TOYOTA | OPTIMO I | 19 seats |
| 1982(Y) | FIAT 60.10 | BEJA | 18 seats |

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Operator Focus



Two of the Bedfords inherited with the company are pictured at Scarborough in the Kingstonian style livery which is gradually being replaced.

Volvo B10M Paramount 3500 is being transferred from the Durham Travel Services fleet, and a Van Hool T815 Alizee integral has been acquired to replace a Dennis Dorchester written off following an accident. This will be the first Van Hool for the fleet although the parent company already operates a number of Scania K113 Alizees, eight of which are fitted with seatbelts.

The old York Pullman company favoured Dennis and AEC vehicles for a large part of its existence and an example of each has been acquired for renovation and eventual recertification. Both are long term projects but work on the first vehicle, a 1957 Roe bodied AEC Regent V has already begun in earnest. The second vehicle, a Dennis Lancet dating from the 1950s is expected to take rather longer to complete. When both buses are ready to return to the road they will strengthen the links between the modern York Pullman and the operation which originated shortly after the First World War.

Summary

So much upheaval in a short period of time has made it difficult for the company to react as swiftly as it would have liked to some of the many changes that have occurred and are continuing to occur in the market. With the opening of the new depot York Pullman now has a much more stable base on which to develop its services to both the local population and those visiting York from further afield. A recent increase in prices charged has not resulted in a recognisable loss of business and the level of private hire bookings which grew in 1993/94 is again looking healthy for 1995. York Pullman may be a very different company from its predecessors, but the team running it is aware of the tradition of quality service associated with the name and aims to be regarded as York's premier coach company.

By Stuart Jones.



The famous maroon, yellow and cream York Pullman livery which was for many years the trademark of the operation lives on on this fine Roe bodied AEC Regent III belonging to Tony Peart, which is regularly to be seen at preserved vehicle rallies.

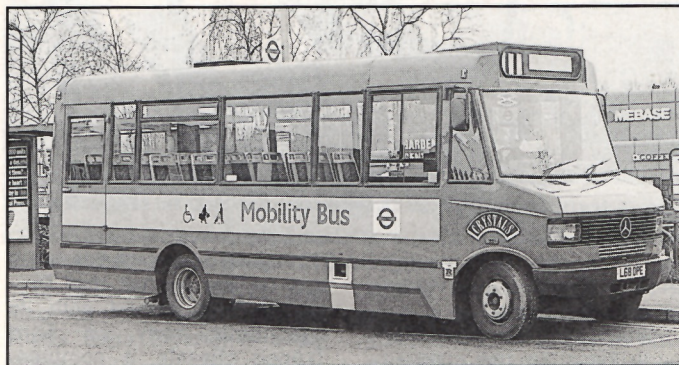
Manufacturer Focus

CRYSTALS CONVERSIONS

Since the formation of Crystals Conversions in 1987, the Crystals' group has not only ridden out the recession but has continued to expand and diversify. The Doncaster conversion and coachbuilding factory boasts an annual growth rate of 89%. Following what was described 'a good year' for Crystals in 1994, further expansion is under way which is aimed at increasing capacity and efficiency within the group as a whole. When production initially began in Doncaster there were just two employees and a 2,700 square feet facility. Now there are 45 staff occupying a 40,000 square feet factory.

Crystals' managing director, Chris Springham, said: 'We started to see a definite upturn in business about 18 months ago and this has continued to snowball. While it is very good to be busy, the demand has created problems in the area of supply. Deliveries of items like seats and glass were taking up to eight weeks - and this was unacceptable to customers. We have been able to rectify the situation somewhat and have been very busy. The company's growth has not accelerated as fast as it might have done because many potential orders are not confirmed when the delivery dates requested cannot be met.'

'Had we been in a position to meet all the potential orders we could so easily



Crystals operate two accessible transport services under contract to London Transport.

have over-stretched ourselves, and growing too fast can have dangerous repercussions. We have also achieved BS5750 accreditation which has become increasingly necessary for us to continue supplying vehicles to local authority customers. It means that all customers can have confidence that the quality of the product has not suffered through a higher output being achieved.'

Crystals have never thrown everything at a particular market which seems to be offering a quick profit at the expense of ongoing business. Now the need is for larger premises and negotiations for larger premises are under way with a number of nearby sites under consideration.

Although 10,000 square feet of the facility are sub-let to another business, and there is now a desperate

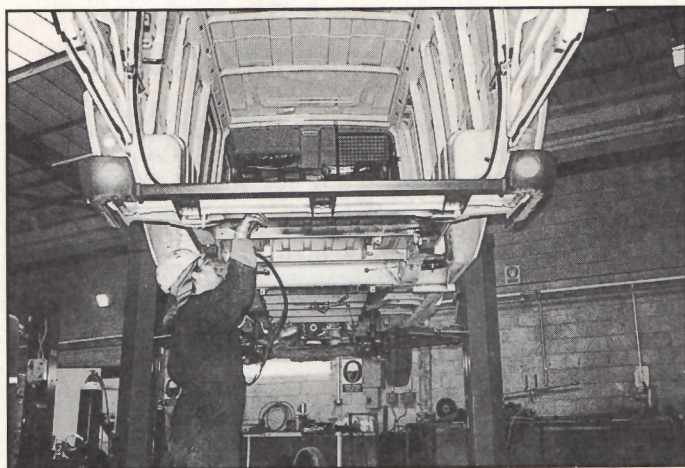
need for more space, the expansion plans do not include excluding the tenant. One reason for this is that Chris is happy to be able to call on his paint spraying facilities without resorting to investment in his own equipment.

To meet with immediate demand and to compensate for the loss of space, mezzanine floors have recently been installed in the factory and these offer a further 8,000 square feet of space which is used for light construction processes and for storage of seats and some large items like front and rear mouldings. This addition has not only freed some valuable floor space for production but has generated sufficient space for the research and development department to function fully. This section can now work completely separately on the continued improvements which are always called for, whether it is altered step arrangements, better entrance doors or more efficient or simplified

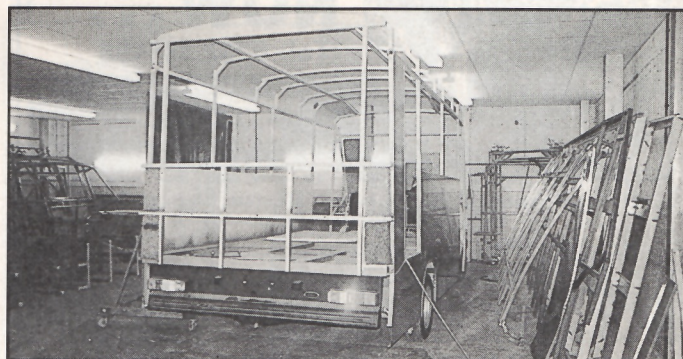
production methods.

The demands for space at Doncaster extend beyond the production area as outside the factory there is very little room not taken up by vehicles waiting to join or leave the production run. Staff and visitors' car parking is at a premium and the company has had to lease space from a neighbouring business in order to provide off-road parking.

The Doncaster facility is controlled by its general manager, John Worgan. He claims that the upsurge in production has been staggering and has led to life becoming little short of hectic at times. He said, 'As soon as one contract is completed, another takes its place because the order book is brimming. We have just delivered six Bedwas bodied vehicles to Smith Self-Drive Hire, there are eight Renault Masters in build for Bradford, thirteen Renault Trafics for the Ministry of Defence, eight Masters for Liverpool and 22 for Bedford. The Renault remains popular because it is very competitively priced but much of our success in this area is down to the efforts of Ray Lingard. Ray came to us and marketed the vehicles under the Europa banner after doing a great deal to develop the lowerable rear suspension system which has proved a real winner. A lot of the workshop is busy at the moment retro-fitting these systems for customers that originally bought standard vehicles. On top of this, Ray has now taken responsibility for the costings on all of



A Renault Master being converted to include lowerable rear suspension.



Research and Development now has its own department. The coachbuilt Challenger has a high priority here at present.

Manufacturer Focus

Crystals' production.'

To relieve John of some of the growing pressures, a new production manager has been appointed. Duncan Halliday joined Crystals in December 1994 and is currently reviewing production as well as overseeing the introduction of computerisation. Despite Crystals having had its accounts on computer for some time, no attempt had yet been made at integrating stores, purchasing, orders and costings. Duncan is now evaluating some likely software systems that should be capable of handling the task and providing a networked facility via modem to the Dartford premises.

A revision of production methods became necessary because of the sheer volume of throughput. The traditional Crystals build programme called for one man to work on one vehicle and to take responsibility for the finished job. Pressure has dictated that more specialisation, combined with a stage-build process, has had to be introduced. Now each vehicle is



The current premises at Doncaster are full to capacity.

the result of several people's efforts though the level of pride in the finished vehicle remains the same.

Changes have also been made because the company has gradually begun to introduce coachbuilt bodies. Crystals' own design was coming along steadily at the time that nearby Europa folded. Crystals seized the opportunity to acquire the Enterprise body, along with some experienced staff, and has abandoned its own development in favour of a tried and tested example. It is being marketed purely on Mercedes Benz 709D or 814D

chassis cowl.

Crystals also had a wary eye on the market that Dormobile had gained with its coachbuilt body on Ford Transit chassis, a combination that had good potential in both PSV and welfare markets. Despite attempts to acquire the designs and jigs when Dormobile folded they never became available. An opportunity did arise to purchase a coachbuilt design from Phoenix International in Southampton and so this has been acquired and forms the backbone of the new Challenger range. It offers a

more stylish alternative to the Bedwas body and serves minibus, minicoach or accessible transport markets.

Contracts to supply welfare or accessible vehicles have been a valuable source of income to all builders and converters, the numbers of which greatly outstripped PSV specification vehicles for a period. Crystals believe this has stabilised now and report that output is generally split fifty-fifty between the two markets.

One area in which Crystals can offer the benefit of experience to customers is that of minibus operation. The company was the first independent operator to gain a London Transport tender in 1985. Later a Social Services contract to provide transport in Kensington and Chelsea was obtained and this was followed by a further London Transport contract for mobility services. At the time of Bus & Coach Buyer's visit, Chris Springham announced that another mobility services contract had just been acquired. This experience



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Manufacturer Focus

means that Crystals frequently encounter the same problems as its customers and uses that knowledge to improve the product.

Other ventures include providing PCV driver training courses and more recently a vehicle servicing department, Crystals Garage, has been opened to extend the use of existing facilities. This does not include accident damage repairs but concentrates entirely on maintenance.

Peugeot Boxer

The Peugeot Boxer was well received upon its launch in 1994 but has met with some criticism over the difficulties it has presented to convertors. The need to fit curved glass to match the saloon walls and re-site the fuel tanks because they are fitted where entrance steps are required, add to the cost of converting the Boxer for bus use. This, combined with a high purchase price, led some convertors to doubt the viability of the model as a serious contender in the market.

These doubts have not stopped orders being received and it appears that the new styling and Peugeot's reputation for reliable power units have been sufficient to attract interest from a number of sources. Vehicles can be produced on short or long wheelbase vans or chassis cowl. Options also apply to the engine which is available naturally aspirated or with a turbocharger in both 1905cc and 2444cc sizes with power outputs of 70bhp or 92bhp and 86bhp or 103bhp respectively.

The demonstrator was a short wheelbase 270 model which had been equipped with eleven seats, two in the



Crystals' Peugeot Boxer 270 Lo-Spec.

front next to the driver and nine in the rear saloon. These were arranged in an alternating two-plus one pattern and were moquette trimmed Kustombilt examples fitted with three-point retractable seat belts. The layout offered very good legroom for passengers and good vision through the side windows. Access to the saloon was via a large sliding door which opened to reveal a cavernous doorway, although only around two thirds of this was available for entry or exit because of the front nearside passenger seat, modesty screen and handrail mounting. There was no step to assist boarding and this could prove a negative point for any elderly or infirm passengers.

The saloon was equipped with an independent heater, additional lighting, stereo speakers and trimmed in grey needlecord with the majority of the roof panel covered in a much darker grey colour of the same material. There was no provision for luggage or belongings but on high roofed versions there would be room for substantial parcel racks. With the twin rear doors doubling as an emergency exit there was, obviously, no boot

space. This limits the use of such a vehicle to schools or contract duties and short haul private hires, which is undoubtedly where this specification of vehicle is aimed.

Another factor pointing in this direction was the choice of the smaller naturally aspirated 1.9 litre engine. On the road the Boxer was very sluggish and lacked acceleration. Noise from the engine grows quite harsh in fourth gear but quietsens considerably when fifth (top) is engaged. The noise would undoubtedly build back again on a motorway trip but at speeds of 50 to 55mph it was unobtrusive.

The lack of performance, which may be down to a new and very tight engine with only a few miles on the clock, did not mean the Boxer was unpleasant to drive. On the contrary. The layout of the controls and driver position in relation to the steering wheel were well thought out and the initial manoeuvres before leaving Crystals' yard highlighted the usefulness of the large side mirrors and the addition of power steering.

It did not take long to become familiar with the novel dash-mounted gearchange and this contributed

to a pleasant driving experience. The change was very positive and quite light - if somewhat clunky, but had to be used a little more often than was desirable because of the low powered engine option. More power would provide far greater flexibility and much less call for gearchanges. One source of annoyance with the short gearlever was that the rubber gaiter around the base refused to remain secured to the dashboard. Despite locating all the clips under the lip in the dashboard cutaway, several times, the gaiter had a passion for freedom and adamantly refused to stay put for all but a few brief moments.

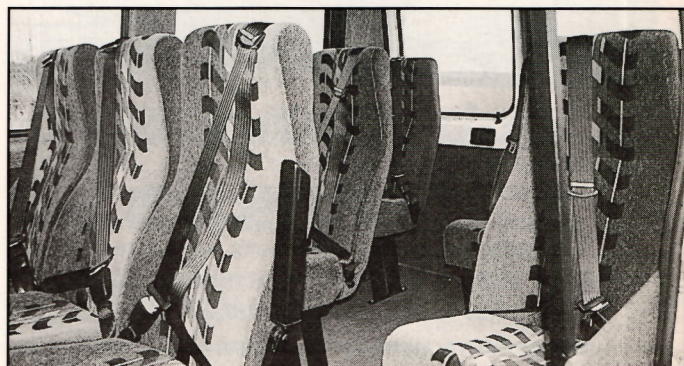
Forward vision for the driver was very good although the front windscreen pillars are quite broad and could provide a blind spot. It was not too noticeable on the short test run and was less disconcerting than the height of the side door windows. These seemed to be a little on the low side and the driver had to crouch to see horizontally or to look up. The view of the tarmac below, however, was excellent.

The generous room around the engine indicates that servicing and maintenance should be a simple procedure and other items mounted under the bonnet seemed to be sited sensibly. Turbocharged versions of the Boxer would be more cramped but there appeared to be sufficient space to accommodate the additional equipment and still retain accessibility.

With minimal specification, these Boxers can be purchased from £13,500 and the demonstration model was being offered at £14,250. Larger Boxer 350 conversions with 15 seats,



The novel dash mounted gearchange on the Boxer range is easy to familiarise with and offers light, positive gear selection.



Retractable diagonal seat belts were fitted to the Kustombilt high backed coach seats.

Manufacturer Focus

increased engine capacity and a high specification are also available. Lowerable suspension is also an option.

LDV 400

The LDV 400 is one of the stalwarts of the minibus and minicoach markets, still bearing a strong resemblance to its Freight Rover and Sherpa ancestry, though the product of today is much more refined and has proved to be a solid and dependable workhorse.

Although there have been rumours of a replacement for the 400 series the indications are that its production will continue for some time. This will be good news to many operators that have found the LDV to be a very practical tool if not the most stylish available. Its rugged construction and use of a traditional bonnet mean that it is simple to work on. This keeps maintenance costs low and the move to install Peugeot engines gave the marque the reliability it craved for so long. Considerable attention has been paid to anti corrosion treatment



The LDV 400 is a cost-effective and reliable package.

and the 400 series has developed into a sensible, value for money option for economic operation.

The example I was given for a brief test was a 16 seater conversion with a Hi-Top roof and based on the 2.5 litre turbocharged engine package. The vehicle had a modified stepwell for improved access, substantial spacious luggage racks, Kustombilt coach seats, a roof vent, additional lighting and four stereo speakers in the saloon which were supplemented by a pair in the front doors.

The interior trim was com-

pleted in needlecord to the sidewalls and a moquette centre stripe, matching the seats, lined the roof. A kick panel was installed around the bottom of the saloon walls and the flooring material was a grey rubberised covering with non-slip material on the entrance steps only. The decency screen ahead of the first pair of nearside seats was also trimmed in cord but had a soft buffer pad attached which was covered in moquette to match the seating. The gangway width was very restricted with two-by-two seating installed, but this

efficient.

The vehicle handled well and its roadholding was very good, inspiring confidence through its predictable nature. Air suspension is an option on turbocharged models and offers the benefits of a smoother but firmer ride. Conventionally sprung examples have been criticised for giving a hard a ride, but often this only lasts for a few miles and when the suspension has warmed up, the ride improves considerably.

A turbocharged 2.5 litre LDV 400, to the specification of the test vehicle sells for around £22,000.

Summary

A direct comparison between the two vehicles is not really fair as they obviously suit different markets. The LDV, in its various guises, has been with us for a long while and is consequently about as refined as it is ever going to get, and the service and backup offered has developed to reflect the success

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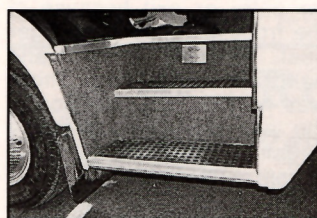
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DEMONSTRATOR AVAILABLE



Lowered entrance steps on the LDV 400 improve access considerably.

was eased by off-setting the seats slightly. Saloon legroom, once seated, was adequate and although some passengers may require a slightly higher window line it cannot be lifted any higher than it has already been raised without compromising the structural integrity of the vehicle.

The driving characteristics of the 2.5 litre turbo are a distinct change from the less powerful models. Much more torque is developed by the engine and so pulling away from a standstill or accelerating from low speed was effortless. The flexibility of the power unit meant that gearchanging could be reduced, making life easier for the driver and more comfortable for passengers. The gearchange was nicely positioned by the driver's side, making it easy to operate and the brakes were extremely



A moquette trimmed buffer pad on the decency screen offers front seat passengers a higher degree of protection.

and popularity of the marque. The Boxer is still a new entity and will gradually evolve as converters become more familiar with it. Both vehicles currently enjoy a common power plant which has become renowned for its economy and reliability, developing a confident customer base and ensuring longevity in the marketplace.

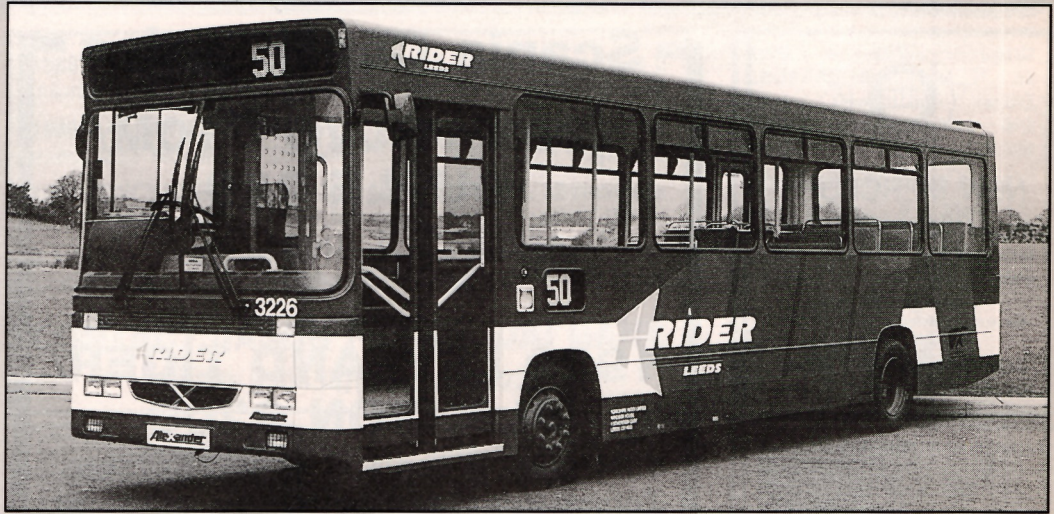
The low specification Boxer 270 represents a good basic package for operating small local contracts. It is not intended to compete with contemporaries with larger capacity engines and saloons, but has bigger brothers that are more than capable of holding their own in terms of performance and versatility with other market contenders.

By Martin Cole

Fleet Additions

Restyled Dash - Rider take first deliveries

The first batch of 20 Dennis Darts from an order for 50 placed by Badgerline, herald the appearance of Alexander's new styling on the Dash body. The front of the vehicle has been completely redesigned and features a horizontal lower line for the optional heated windscreens, twin headlights, fog/spot lamps, improved accessibility and a new grille incorporating the Alexander saltire. Destined for the Yorkshire Rider fleet, the Darts are all 10.0 metres in length and are equipped with 40 seats, luggage pens and provision for 18 standee passengers. They also feature Rider designed driver assault screens with anti-reflective panels.



Omnibus B6 octet

Sheffield Omnibus is now operating a batch of eight Volvo B6 midibuses with Alexander Dash bodywork. Acquired through the Volvo/Alexander stock build programme, the new vehicles are of standard 10.0 metre specification which includes 40 seats, a luggage pen and an additional capacity of 17 standee passengers.



Peter Carol Coaches of Bristol have taken delivery of this Toyota Optimo III from Yeates Bus & Coach. It is finished to GL specification with 18 reclining seats, power plug door, tinted glazing, curtains, forced air ventilation, individual reading lights, radio/pa/cassette system and a large boot.



Jonckheere Monaco double deck duo for Excelsior

A pair of Jonckheere Monaco double decker coaches on Volvo B12T chassis have been delivered to Excelsior Holidays of Bournemouth. Both are equipped with 71 reclining seats, twin courier seats, toilet/washroom facility, fridges and water boilers. Other features include double glazing, hand dryers in the washrooms and Voith retarders fitted to the transmission. The coaches were supplied by Yeates Bus & Coach.



Leon Motor Services of Finningley, South Yorkshire, have placed two new Optare Metroriders in service. The duo are employed on Doncaster town services, replacing Leyland Cubs with Optare bodies. Built to the wider of the Metroriders' two width options, the buses have 31 seats, luggage pens and a variety of DIPTAC features.

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recent engine and gearbox overhaul,
MoT May '95

£9,500

LEYLAND LEOPARD 1977
SUPREME, semi-auto, 53 seats, Bristol
dome destination gear, recent
engine/gearbox overhaul, MoT May
'95

£4,000

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EXPRESS, 1979 V, 53 seats, power
doors, Telma, engine overhaul last
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53 retrimmed recliners, good sound vehicle, tested to May '95, will retest if required.

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74 seat, dual door, Voith automatic gearbox with retarder, tested June '95

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1982 R1114 FORD V reg, full test, used daily, suitable for contracts, power door. £3,000 + VAT. Tel: 0773 872105. 294/3669/FO

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1986 FREIGHT ROVER 200 DIESEL, 7 seater taxibus, full proper taxi conversion, fitted with seat belts taxed and MoT£2,750 + VAT ono

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294/3801/LE

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294/3748/LE

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294/2112/LE

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294/3678/LE

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Semi auto, Doyen, integral coachwork, 50 recliners + courier, MoT July 95, very good condition all round
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0332 290620**

1365/LE

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3239/LE

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294/2156/LE

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3026/LE

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294/3913/LE

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294/3903/ME

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294/3818/ME

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294/3829/ME

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294/3823/ME

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294/3736/MC

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294/2651/MC

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294/3796/MC

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294/3797/MB

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 seater£12,450
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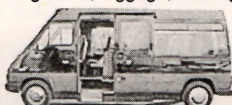
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81 BEDFORD, 53 Duple. Testing.

80 FORD, 35 seat Duple II, tested

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79 FORD, 35 Duple II testing

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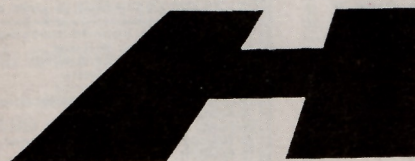
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1986 IVECO VIANA, 19 seats, power operated door. Interior — red and beige; Exterior — white. MoT August 1995

1986 DAF SB 2300 PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 47 reclining seats, courier seat, centre sunken toilet. Interior — red; Exterior — white. MoT August 1995

1986 (D) DAF SB PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 55 seats, power door, curtains. Interior — autumn tint; Exterior — white/maroon. MoT November 1995

1986 VOLVO B9M PLAXTON PARAMOUNT 3200, 43 seats, power operated door. Interior — autumn tint; Exterior orange/white. MoT December 1995

1983 VOLVO B10M DUPLA LASER, 57 seats, power door, TELMA retarder. Interior — green/grey; Exterior — white/yellow. MoT September 1995

1983 MERCEDES 0303, 53 reclining seats, air conditioning, courier seat. Interior — red; Exterior — blue

1983 VOLVO B10M VAN HOOL ALIZEE H, 48 reclining seats, rear toilet, continental door, servery. Interior — autumn tint; Exterior — white/beige. MoT June 1995

1983 MAN SR280, 49 reclining seats, centre sunken toilet, continental door, water boiler, wired for video. Interior — red; Exterior — red/white

1982 BOVA EUROPA, 49 seats, toilet, courier seat. Interior — blue; Exterior — white, MoT November 1995

1980 VOLVO B58 PLAXTON SUPREME 4, 53 reclining seats, power door, automatic transmission, TELMA retarder, curtains. Interior — brown; Exterior — white/green. MoT July 1995

1979 AEC 12MTR DUPLA DOMINANT II, 57 seats, Interior — red/grey; Exterior — white/red, MoT February 1996

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LEYLAND 1989 Tiger Duple 320, 57 reclining seats, all white, MoT Dec 1995

LEYLAND 1988 Tiger Duple 340, 55 reclining seats, all white, MoT April 1995

LEYLAND 1982 Leopard Plaxton Supreme, 57 fixed seats, MoT April 1995

DAF 1983 MB230 LAG Galaxy, 49 recliners, crew seat, toilet, drinks, fridge, wired for TV/Video, MoT November '95

BEDFORD 1986 YNV Duple 320, 57 rec seats, finished in cream with red reliefs. Interior: grey/red/orange stripe moquette, power door, MoT January 1996

BEDFORD 1983 11M YNT Duple Dominant IV Express, 53 seat, brown/orange interior.

BEDFORD 1979 YMT Duple Dominant, 53 seats, MoT August 1995.

FORD 1982 Plaxton, 51 seat coach, MoT November 1995

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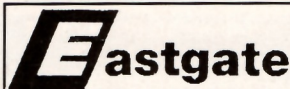
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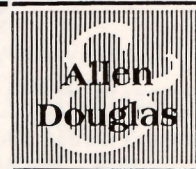
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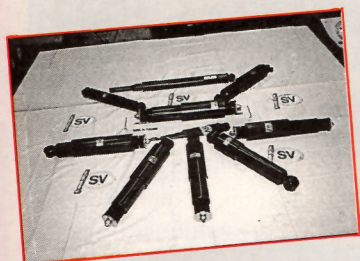
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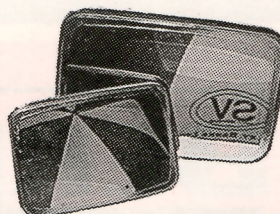
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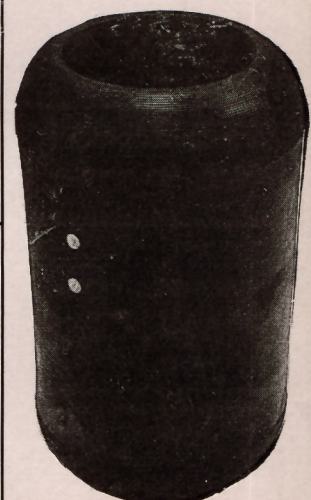
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